



# Annual Report

1998 - 1999

1485 North Main Ste. C Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

## Director's Report

***Dra. Diana Bustamante:***

The CDC continues to provide support and technical assistance to member communities in a wide range of areas, including advocacy, training and information exchange on relevant policies. One of CDC's main functions is to help build local organizations within each of the colonias. The main Focus of our work is to enhance the capacity of colonia residents so that they themselves leverage resources into their communities. In essence, CDC strives to assist colonia residents to be self-sufficient in accessing resources for their communities. CDC works under three basic assumptions: First, that people are acutely aware of their needs and resources; second, that given the opportunity, people can take positive actions to change conditions in their lives and thirdly, that by building communities through mutual support, people can become empowered to overcome obstacles in their environment which before may have appeared insurmountable. CDC follows a systematic process of community organizing which is transferable to each community: Community leaders are identified and recruited through a process of one-on-one interviews, focus groups and com-

munity meetings. CDC provides training on team building, strategic planning, communication skills, conflict management, advocacy and group facilitation skills. CDC works with each respective community on issues they have identified as a community. CDC then assists the community in developing a work plan and time line for carrying out the activities set forth by themselves. While each member community is at a different stage of development, CDC staff continues to provide support for the organizing efforts each community may be involved in.

This last year was filled with many challenges and accomplishments. CDC was impacted by changes in staff composition. First, in the fall of 1998, CDC accepted the resignation of Lorenza Dorado, community organizer for the southern part of the county. Second, Carlos Corral, long-time community organizer and Board member, has been on medical leave since early this year. While the absence of both Carlos and Lorenza left a void in the organizing activities, the rest of the CDC staff filled in as much as possible. Carlos is tentatively scheduled to return to work in the early Spring and CDC was able to

hire a new organizer, Isabel Armendáriz, in February of this year.

In the spring of 1999, the President of the Board of Directors, Dr. Milagros Pena, resigned from the Board as she has recently moved to Florida. Dr. Rudolfo Chavez Chavez is the new President of the Board of Directors.

A two-year demonstration project from the Rural Health Office at the University of Arizona came to a close in the fall of 1998. The Border Vision Fronteriza Project (BVF) provided the opportunity to combine community organizing, or mobilization, efforts and *promotora* outreach work in the colonias of southern New Mexico. CDC was able to expand its organizing activities to the communities of Columbus, Del Cerro and Rincón, which were also the demonstration sites for this project. Margarita Luján and MaryAnn Benavides have remained as volunteer organizers for the communities of Columbus and Rincón. CDC will continue to provide technical assistance and community organizing support for these communities.

CDC formed a partnership with Tierra Del Sol Housing Development Corporation,

Inc. (TDS), in the fall of 1998. CDC and TDS collaborated in the submission of a proposal to the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to request funds for the construction of new housing units and housing rehabilitation. CDC's original role was to provide community economic development technical assistance for this initiative, but HUD only funded the housing component. TDS and CDC met several times this spring to iron out the details of the role CDC will have in assisting TDS with this project. Communities targeted for this housing initiative are Las Palmeras, Montana Vista and El Milagro. This housing project will set a precedent in carrying out the comprehensive community development plan first articulated by the Colonias Task Force over three years ago. The Colonias Task Force, chaired by Bishop Ricardo Ramírez, consists of public and private agencies committed to the transformation of colonias into viable and vibrant communities. It is hoped that this housing initiative will serve as a pilot project to be modeled in other colonia-designated communities in Doña Ana County.

Amnesty International, in a report entitled, *United States of America: Human Rights Concerns in the Border Region with Mexico* (May 1998), describes many of the abuses and violations commit-

ted by the Border Patrol along the border. And, coincidentally, for some time now, the CDC Board of Directors has been concerned with complaints of alleged abuses and violations of Border Patrol practices vis-a-vis colonia residents. CDC staff attended a conference on human rights for immigrants and refugees in December. This conference served as an incentive to invite representatives from the Immigration Law Enforcement Monitoring Program (ILEMP) to give an overview of its work to CDC's Board of Directors. In February, María Jiménez from ILEMP gave a presentation of the work along the U.S.-Mexico border to the Board of Directors and invited guests. This presentation reaffirmed the Board's interest in providing training on the identification and documentation of abuses by Border Patrol and other law enforcement agencies. The training, *CONOZCA SUS DERECHOS*, is scheduled for the Fall of 1999.

This report provides a glimpse of the work CDC has undertaken this last year. The community organizing efforts, though slightly diminished because of the changes with staff, have been consistent. These efforts may appear slow in progressing, but when seen as a whole, it is clear that many issues have been tackled. CDC's work is well demarcated by the needs identified by

colonia residents. And while we may not address each and every issue as closely as we may want, the overall impact on colonia communities is encouraging. As I have said in other instances, the community organizing work is long and sometimes very frustrating. However, the spirit of faith and strength of commitment is reflected in the successes we witness everyday. For example, Marta Jiménez from the community of El Milagro, in an interview earlier this summer, captures the voice of the many colonia residents with whom we work. Her perseverance and faith in the people from her community could serve as incentives for other communities. In summary, what stands out is the willingness to work *in community* for the future of the children, who will be the next generation's leaders.

***An interview with Marta Jiménez/Summer of 1999:***

Marta Jiménez has lived in El Milagro for seven years. When she first moved to El Milagro, there were only about ten families there. The reasons for which she, like many others, moved to El Milagro was because they wanted a place where the children could play freely, where they could feel safe. Marta says that the children are supervised by everyone in the community

because it is a small community. They wanted a place where everyone knew each other; where, even though there may be conflict between community members, they could continue working together. Marta thinks that it is important that children maintain the Spanish and English languages, because children function as interpreters for the parents who do not speak English.

***What was it that motivated you to start working with CDC?***

Mainly, that there was no one here that could say what needs we had. We did not have services, we did not have pavements, we did not have anything. We found out that there was a program that worked to help people to get organized. That is what motivated me: seeing the needs that we had here.

***How do you see this community in comparison with other communities (other colonias)?***

When we arrived here, we never thought that we were going to live like this for very long. We thought that there was someone that could help us to live better, but we did not know if there were other communities in the same circumstances as we were, until we started to ask. We asked people at CDC if we were the only ones living like this and we found out that we were not; that there were many communities that lived the same or worse than us and that CDC

was helping them to get organized.

***What has CDC offered you personally?***

Well, they have taught me many things. Mainly they taught me how to speak to people. I have taken advantage of several of their workshops.

***What is it that motivates people to work in the community?***

I think that the children motivate all of us; to see that we want something better for them. Because we are on our way out, but they are growing. ***Do you think there is different participation between the women and the men in this community?*** I talk to the majority of people from here, but I have more participation from the men than with the women . . . some of them have referred to the women as: "They are good for the home. I want that all the men be involved in everything." And I have always said to them: "If it wasn't for a woman being in the lead, the men don't do anything?" [and what do they respond to that ] They laugh. They say it is not true. I see that even though the women are not allowed to participate too much in the things we do, they help us by cooking meals for the activities. But, for other things, like going out to clean the streets, it's only the men and the children.

***And the youth?***

When we have the car washes, there has been youth;

when we have meetings, many of the youth go, because they are interested. And they do ask: what is it you do? Now that there is a center, the home of ROC, the youth are getting together. I think that it is going to fill up. There will be plenty of youth involved. I think that they are the ones that can learn better because they know both languages. The majority of the youth can make themselves understood in both languages. And that is our problem, those of us who are older here: that we only speak one language. ***Has there been uneasiness in regards to immigration, or the border patrol, regarding the abuse of authority? What is it that you see that can happen if these abuses are not documented? What can be done to change the situation with immigration?***

I think there will continue to be abuses because, here in El Milagro, there have been many incidents. The people sometimes don't walk comfortably in the streets, because the Border Patrol comes in and drives by and everything. I think that if they don't put a stop to it, if someone doesn't help us, they are going to continue bothering the people. There are some persons that may not have (their legal) papers, some that do have papers: I think that everyone should walk freely.

***How do you think this affects the children?***

It affects them a lot,

because there are children, for example, that come from Mexico and hear “Here comes the Migra,” and the children run and go to their homes. There are children that are citizens (who were born here). However, they are afraid (of the Border Patrol) because they hear it from their parents. It may be that their parents may not have papers, and they (the children) have a right to be here. But if they hear it in their homes they are afraid of them (of Border Patrol). When there are children, youth, and even adults, I, personally, I have told them: “Don’t be afraid. They are not going to do anything to you. You walk as if you don’t see them. They don’t have reason to stop you. But if they do stop you, you can ask, what do you want?” If they say good morning, then return the greeting. Because sometimes, it is simply only a greeting. And I also tell them that it is very important to learn English. Know how to answer a greeting; be able to turn and say “hi” and don’t be afraid of that. Because there are officials that pass by and the only thing they say is ‘how are you and have a good day. Go.’ Sometimes we don’t understand and we only grin our teeth. When we stare or look disconcerted, that is when they (the officials) think that we have done something wrong. I believe that in the trainings, they should include what the people feel.

*(Can you see the fear in*

*the children?.* When school is about to end, the children are so happy because they are going to travel to Mexico, to the native place of their parents. The people wait for their vacation to go away for one or two weeks to their home towns. And the children are happy, because they know that when school ends, they are going for a while over there. And when they return, they feel oppressed. I don’t think it is fair. *[Can you tell?]* You can tell when they return. You can see the difference between a child that has lived here for a long time and one that has just arrived. You can also see it in the adults. *[What is the difference?]* I think that it is the confidence and the manner in which they are brought up in their own homes; that the children hear the talk about the Migra and they comment, “they are the ones that take people away when they don’t have papers.” You can see it even in their character and the way they speak, which is very different: The children that have just arrived are more quiet. If you ask them something, they do not look directly at you. They lower their heads as if they are afraid. This also happens with the adults: There are persons that say that they cannot talk too much with us because they have just arrived. And I tell them that we need to give them confidence. Many times I have said to them, “I cannot report you and I will not report you.

You can be at peace and live peacefully. Is the Migra coming? They cannot come into your home. If you are afraid, stay in your home. But, you can walk along the street--go in and out. If you don’t do anything bad, they will not stop you.” And that is what the people need to know: that if they don’t do anything wrong. And, a child does not do anything wrong.

***What does the CDC need in order to do a more effective job?***

I think the workshops offered are good (regarding) all the needs that we have. But, I think that one thing is needed to motivate the communities. I believe they should motivate them (the communities) by giving them a gift each year to those that go to the meetings. I believe that it could be something that would be useful to the community. For example, we have meetings, but we don’t have chairs or tables for when there are lots of people. (The CDC helps us) in many things, they give us information. Whatever we want to know, they give us all the information we need. But, beyond the information, the workshops they offer, I think that in order to motivate the communities more they could do something else: I would like to have somewhere to shade ourselves or something, at least to have chairs. For example a table that we could count on it, a large gallon, for example, that we

could use for punch or bring water for the people. We ourselves supply the film for the cameras, the sodas, the ice, etc. I believe that it would be good for the community to see that things are working. It doesn't have to be anything big, just something that is good for everyone.

***What is your vision for the future of El Milagro?***

I see El Milagro with their sewer system finished. I see the park, with its courts and its swings for the children. I see one of my sons working as I have worked for the people here. Because I feel satisfaction, you see, like I haven't been here in vain. Then I see in the future that when I am older, the youth will say, "look, this woman is one of the persons that started here." I see myself content with the people, because we have more people who are content than those that are unhappy. The people will see the fruits of what we have accomplished by being together and doing things united.

***What are the things you would like to see as projects for CDC in respect to this community in three to five years?***

That everyone have their land titles. To have the sewer system finished. To have the roads so that the school bus can make the turns to pick up our children. We have an arroyo which is going to cause a lot of problems. The arroyo is strong and destroys pieces of the road. I would like to see it

fixed as soon as it would be possible. Because I believe that this is one of the main problems and if we could resolve it, all of the people would be happier. And, it is something that the people can see. The people can see it and say: "CDC helped us in this and they did not rest until they helped all of us equally."

***What message, or incentive, could you give to other people from other communities so they can see the gains of El Milagro? What would be the message for people in other communities?***

To be constant and not let themselves feel depressed because at the first meeting they had only five persons. If they don't come, go. We did this for a time. That we didn't get a lot of people, then go somewhere else. I suggest changing the meetings from north to south and from east to west. To have meetings in the four points of the community so individuals can see at which points more people come. To always be optimistic. For example, if there was a meeting and there were 10 people, they should say at the next one we will have 15 people! To be optimistic and say that "Yes more will come." To be pessimistic or to be sad, transmits the sadness or the negativity to other people. On the other hand they should always be content and always think positively for others. If there are people that have a problem,

to say: We are going to have this meeting and we are going to try and resolve it.

***The following people generously donated funds during the 1998-1999 fiscal year:***

Sylvia Apodaca, Diana Bustamante, Gerardo Cortez, Dolores Díaz, Dolores & Tom Dreyer, Faye Gibson, Juan & Florencia Jaramillo, Mike Lilly, Father Bill McCann, Mary Meadows, Rubén Nuñez, Lucio Ortiz, Sara Lee Hosiery, Arturo Trevino, Angela Valenzuela Ramona Vallejos, Sherman Williams, and an anonymous local donor.

CDC continues to promote and cultivate its relationship with many organizations that provide support to the community organizing efforts. It has continued its collaborations with BankAmerica Foundation, Basilian Fathers of Toronto, Campaign for Human Development, Diocese of Las Cruces, Dominican Sisters of Springfield Illinois, Doña Ana County, Fannie Mae Foundation, Levinson Foundation, McCune Charitable Foundation, Needmor Foundation, New Mexico Community Foundation, Peace Development Fund, Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities, REA Magnet Wire Co., Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Unitarian Universalist, University of Arizona-Rural Health Office.

# Community Reports

## *El Milagro:*

The community of El Milagro has been very active this last year. The local board has continued to work closely with Border WaterWorks in the construction of the self-help wastewater system. This system consists of three components: the septic tanks, where primary treatment takes place, the collection system where the effluent from the septic tank flows and the treatment plant itself, where secondary treatment of the wastewater is completed. Treated water will then be reverted to the community and used to irrigate the tree-lined streets and a future sports field and playground. Funds to complete the project in this community are being sought.

El Milagro was one of several communities that applied for a subsidy through a grant from the Paso Del Norte Foundation to the Center for Education and Research Management (CERM) at the University of Texas at El Paso. The applications were processed through Ben Archer Health Center (BAHC) and CDC was subcontracted to facilitate this process. Applications were submitted to CERM for review and, to date, most applicants from El Milagro qualified as eligible for these funds. These monies were used to defray the cost of the system for the whole community. A final count of eligible households is pending.

Last summer, the local board of El Milagro held a strategic planning session, facilitated by Antonio Luján and Rubén Núñez, organizers for this community. The local board showed an interest in incorporating as a formal organization. This will enable the community, through their organization, to apply for funds to carry out community development projects. The board is also interested in purchasing adjacent land that can be used for housing development. CDC staff has already begun the research for both the formal organization and the purchase of the adjacent land. El Milagro community residents carried out several community activities throughout the year. These included fundraising from a car wash, collecting food baskets for the Christmas holidays and donating these baskets throughout the community and community-wide clean-up events. The Doña Ana County Environmental Services Department agreed to provide the trash bins for the community when they have their clean-ups. The local board has also planned to conduct other fundraising events to help support the Recreational Organizing Project (ROC) in Hatch. ROC works with youth throughout the northern part of the county and El Milagro wants to extend their collaboration in ROC's endeavors to work with the youth.

## *Salem:*

Last year, the Salem Organizing Project decided to reorganize their local Board. A new Board was elected in August of 1998. Five new members made the commitment to evaluate the past projects and to develop a strategic plan to identify community issues and to assess community needs. A representative and two alternates were chosen to represent Salem at the CDC Board of Directors and these representatives have been consistent in their presence at the Board of Directors' meetings.

A series of mini training sessions for the local Board members in Salem were facilitated by Rubén Núñez, Lead Organizer for CDC, in the Fall of 1998. Among the topics covered were the following: Leadership Development, Community Organizing, Conflict Management and Board Development. Members of the Salem Board feel confident the community will join them in working toward improving their neighborhood. The Board has already met several times to discuss the plans for their community park. Over six years ago, the State legislature allocated \$150,000 for the capital outlay in Salem. These funds were slated for the acquisition and development of a community park. The local Board has taken the initiative to follow through with this project, taking into consider-

ation the interests and requests of the rest of residents in Salem. They have already reviewed information on playground equipment. The next step is to solicit information from Salem residents regarding a plat for the actual park and to access the aforementioned funds to complete the development of their park.

Throughout this last year, the local Board also hosted several meetings with representatives from the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) regarding a wastewater system for Salem. Communication between the Doña Ana County, Hatch and Salem has been continuous on this topic. Salem residents have been consistent in their request to have a stand-alone wastewater system, as they live north of the Río Grande and connecting to the Hatch system seems very complicated and conceivably expensive. The cost of connecting has had residents preoccupied, as many Salem residents find the hook-up and maintenance fees from Hatch as potentially exorbitant. In the past, Hatch has not been receptive to Salem's need to upgrade their wastewater system. The County of Doña Ana has opened the bids for designs of a wastewater system for Salem. Once a design has been accepted, a public hearing will ensue so that community residents will have some input. It is important for Salem residents to take ownership of

and to have a voice in any decision-making process. CDC is committed to support the local Board in their endeavors to leverage resources into their community and to continue to assist in the community organizing efforts.

**Rincón:**

*El Orgullo de Rincón* (OR) continues to work collectively to make their community pleasant and child-focused. They have worked diligently to carry out their quarterly community clean-ups. The OR has worked closely with the Environmental Services Department of Doña Ana County (DAC) to secure that trash bins, trash bags and other items needed for the clean-ups are available. The clean-ups include the collection of trash and weeds from streets and vacant lots. The beautification project of the park continues unabated, with these community clean-ups being organized around the park. Other concerns identified by residents are vacant buildings that abound throughout the community. OR petitioned DAC to condemn these building for fear of endangering children who play in them. Some of these building have already been condemned. Other concerns in the community, in which OR members are also interested, include leveraging resources for housing rehabilitation, as many of the homes are in grievous need of repair.

Rincón residents are still concerned with the environmental impact the feed company, which opened operations in Rincón over six years ago, may have on the community. This company makes liquid feed for livestock. The company, Mesa Feed, uses urea (a soluble nitrogenous compound contained in urine) to process the feed. Residents complain about the vapors from its cooking process which produces a sweet pungent smell throughout the area. Besides suspecting that the lagoons of liquid that exist in the property of the company may eventually get into the ground water, members feel that the increase in the amount of flies and cockroaches in the area is a direct result of the cooking process of the feed. CDC, in collaboration with OR and other entites, will research the environmental impact on the community.

Rincón was also one of the northern Doña Ana County communities targeted to receive funds to defray the cost of the septic tanks from the Paso Del Norte Project, mentioned in the Milagro section. However, guidelines for eligibility were unclear when applications were taken. In the middle of the application process, the Center for Education and Research Management, from the University of Texas in El Paso, determined that those communities slated to have wastewater systems constructed within the

next three years would not be eligible for the subsidies. Rincón was one of those communities. Thus, all of the 38 to 40 applications taken from community members were void.

*El Orgullo de Rincón* continues to recruit other residents to join them in developing a five-year plan for the community. OR is interested in getting closure from the DAC on the construction of the wastewater system, slated to be built since several years ago. Pending, according to the County, is the issue of the land to be purchased for the treatment plant.

***Fairacres:***

After numerous community meetings in Fairacres and acknowledging that the conditions of the illegal subdivision would prohibit any community development to take place, the residents of Río Grande Estates filed a lawsuit in July of 1998 for “specific performance” (meaning performance pursuant to contractual obligation) by the developer (who sold property to the residents in this community). This lawsuit sought to have the developer comply with the subdivision laws, or in the alternative, abatement of the purchase price of the property, to account for the difference in value of the property, and the cost of bringing the property up to code.

The developer filed a

motion to dismiss, on the basis that residents had brought the lawsuit after the statute of limitations. However, because the residents were asking for a decrease in the purchase price and they were still paying the purchase price, the deadline for filing could not have expired. The residents, in *Lira, et al, vs. Isidro López*, compiled Mr. López’s testimony and together with affidavits and other documentation, presented an argument to the court that a trial on liability was necessary. The judge supported this argument.

The case was then referred to mediation. Representatives from all the lots in the Río Grande Estates, together with CDC and the Southern New Mexico Legal Services (SNMLS), met with Mr. López and his legal counsel. The mediation provided the parties an opportunity to settle a case without a court order. As such, he agreed to release the titles to the properties in December of 2000, after which time residents would be required to make the necessary improvements of infrastructure. The amount of money still owed on the land would be set aside precisely for community improvement projects, which would allow residents to develop a community development plan. López also agreed to pay the cost of replatting the community, so that residents could submit them to the county for approval. Since he agreed to back his offer with

other land, the Río Grande Estates residents wanted assurances that he has clear title to the land. The community is currently waiting for Mr. López to provide these assurances.

In the meantime, the residents have shown an interest in establishing an organizational entity, so that the money will be spent to comply with the subdivision laws, as intended. This organizational entity will provide a structure beyond the family unit and will be based on mutual support. The intention is to engage the whole community in developing a work plan in implementing infrastructure projects. SNMLS and CDC will continue to work with the community to develop this organizational entity. This will only be possible when Mr. López fulfills his agreement in terms of the assurance laid out by the court.

***Amber Mesa:***

Work in this community began in July of 1998, during one of the areas heaviest rains. CDC organizers met with community members throughout the latter part of the summer and early fall. Adequate roads and drainage were identified as main priorities by community residents. In October a community meeting was held with over 50 in attendance. Of these, 10 representatives were selected to work with the organizers. A series of leadership trainings were scheduled, but only the

first training was well attended. Efforts to accommodate community representatives in different ways were attempted, such as meeting at the homes, but that was met with little response. In terms of the community organizing efforts, CDC believes there is much work to be done to bring about a balance between the community and the organizers. Carlos Corral's illness and absence from the organizing has been a factor that has delayed the CDC's organizing effort in Amber Mesa. However, CDC is committed to revisiting the community organizing efforts with representatives of the community.

In the meantime, Kenneth Stevens, civil engineer from the Southwest Technology Development Institute at New Mexico State University was consulted to assist in developing practical self-help initiatives that would at least temporarily address Amber Mesa's concerns over streets and drainage. As such, Mr. Stevens volunteered to develop procedures by which the community can take the initiative to ameliorate some of the most pressing flooding problems in the community. He has suggested three methods: One method is to put a culvert at the entrance to Amber Mesa parallel to Holman Road. While this would not solve the whole problem, it will alleviate some of the flooding. Community members could dig a ditch

along Holman Road to keep the water from flowing away. This is very labor intensive and all the community would need to take part. For this option, roughly 100 work-hours would be needed to install the ditch. The second method involves designing a drainage plan whereby the runoff water could be directed in a way to minimize water damage to the community. Ditches could be dug along community streets by its members. Culverts could also be installed to allow easier access to houses. This could be done in pieces with the most affected areas done first. The third method is for each individual property owner would retain as much water from the rain in their properties so that it would not flow into the streets. Basically all that is needed would be for each owner to construct a small berm around the edge of the property, especially on the lower edge. This would retain the water on the lot, helping with plants and/or improve the quality of the land. There are a few houses that already do this and it is obvious that plants on the property are better because of it and the destruction of the road around the house is minimized.

Any or all three of these methods are viable ways in which the community can divert the flood waters. CDC and Mr. Stevens are willing to develop a work plan that would be agreeable to the residents of this community. Mr. Stevens

has offered to help design and construct a self-help plan to alleviate some of the drainage problems. At this point, the community needs to decide which alternative is the most feasible for them.

***Mesquite:***

In Mesquite, the local group of Comunidad Tres Piedras continues to work toward getting natural gas in their community. Brian and Anita Moffett, representatives to the Council, moved to Arizona in the Spring of 1999 and Sofia Robles has taken the initiative to continue researching the possibility of the natural gas hook-up. It will be recalled that last year, CDC helped Anita Moffett to procure signatures and a deposit for those households that were interested in getting connected with natural gas. In the fall of 1998, CDC staff met with the Río Grande Natural Gas Association (RGNGA) to revisit the plans for the connection in the community of Tres Piedras. We were able to get clear information regarding the potential cost for bringing natural gas into Tres Piedras. This information was brought back to a community meeting where people reaffirmed their interest in connecting to natural gas.

As mentioned earlier, Sofía Robles volunteered to take on the responsibility of seeing the process through. She opened a savings account

for the Tres Piedras community with the deposits that had already been collected. Sofía and Moisés Robles accompanied CDC staff to a meeting with representatives from the RGNGA to confirm information regarding the cost, loans available to residents and actual timeline of completion of the connection. CDC has committed to research the options available for other extraneous costs that may surface in making the conversion from propane to natural gas. Procuring a plumber who will bid for the installation of the gaslines to the actual properties is underway. The costs of laying the pipelines from the service lines may be reduced if residents agree to work collaboratively and in a self-help manner in digging the trenches for the gaslines. CDC is committed to facilitating this process once the community decides they will follow through with the natural gas hook-up. While there are some residents who have become discouraged, the important thing to remember is that if they work together as a community, the cost for the project will be reduced dramatically. The cost of natural gas, according to our research, is about 60% less than for propane gas. Even as the initial cost may seem high, the long-term savings cannot be underestimated.

***Las Palmeras and Montana Vista:***

The community organizing efforts in the southern part of the county were delayed a few months because the organizer for this region resigned from CDC in October of 1998. CDC was unable to hire a new community organizer until February of this year. The new organizer, Isabel Armendáriz, has been assigned five communities in the southern part of the county. After a lull of over six months, CDC renewed the community organizing efforts in the spring of 1999 with Isabel. She comes to CDC with lots of experience in the area of community outreach work. She has worked with rural populations for many years and is familiar with the local characteristics of the county. Isabel received hands-on training from Rubén Núñez for the first few months and just recently returned from a 10-day training by the Industrial Areas Foundation in Los Angeles, California. Isabel has already initiated the one-on-one interviews and focus groups with residents of Las Palmeras and Montana Vista. These interviews and focus groups provide an opportunity to revisit the priorities as seen by community residents. It will also help to assist the community in developing a work plan to deal with many of the pressing issues existent in the community.

In Las Palmeras, the issue that persistently surfaces is

that because this community continues to be an illegal subdivision, with all its attendant restrictions for development, any effort toward community development initiative will have to await the completion of the wastewater system. In addition, the developer has not complied with the consent decree of 1995 from the lawsuit to grade the streets in this community.

In Montana Vista, the wastewater system and its operability continues to be a pressing concern for some residents. Some community residents have also identified an interest in developing a public park for their children. As with Las Palmeras, Montana Vista residents continue to show an interest in working for the development of their community.

Border WaterWorks continues to work in the communities of Las Palmeras and Montana Vista to carry out the mandates of the construction of the wastewater systems. It should be recalled that Las Palmeras, along with the community of Montana Vista, secured a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of \$400,000 to help defray the cost for the completion of its wastewater system. The system is expected to be operational in the fall of 1999. Montana Vista's share in this grant is to help defray the cost of laying the wastewater pipeline that will connect this community to

the Anthony Water and Sanitation District. Because of delays in the county to ascertain archeological research compliance, as required by the Community Development Block Grant guidelines, actual completion of the wastewater system has been delayed. CDC, Border WaterWorks, Inc., and the respective county offices met various times during this last year to discuss some of the pressing compliance issues that kept coming up and has deterred the actual construction.

The work on the construction of the stand-alone wastewater system for Las Palmeras continued slowly throughout this year. The efforts of residents in this community who have contributed their time and labor have assured that the major part of the construction of the system is complete. As with El Milagro, the kind of wastewater treatment system designed for Las Palmeras has three components--the septic tanks, where primary treatment takes place, the collection system where the effluent from the septic tank flows and the treatment plan itself where secondary treatment of the wastewater is completed. In this system, the idea is to use the treated wastewater to irrigate tree-lined streets. Other areas that could easily be irrigated would be playgrounds and/or sports fields.

As stated in the Director's report, Tierra Del

Sol Housing (TDS) Corporation has received a grant from the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office to provide housing rehabilitation and new housing construction for three communities. Las Palmeras, Montana Vista and El Milagro are three communities that may be eligible for this housing initiative. TDS and CDC will work in a partnership to see this project come to fruition. Preliminary research will be conducted in all three communities to assure baseline information is current on all three communities. TDS and CDC have already met with county officials several times already to assure compliance with housing requirements for this initiative.

***Youth Organizing Project:***

The past year was a breakout year for the Youth Organizing Project (YOP). The Colonias Development Council's (CDC) commitment to developing young leaders led to the development of one of its strongest member organizations.

The leaders of the Recreational Organizing Council (ROC), based in Hatch, took advantage of the CDC's training and technical assistance and with it won a campaign to open a recreational center for use by Hatch Valley youth. ROC developed a work plan with three main goals to start the center. This included building relationships with the local

school Board, superintendent and village trustees; developing and providing alternative recreational activities; writing grant proposals and holding local fundraisers. The leaders accomplished all their goals. By building relationships with adult leaders they negotiated the terms for leasing a building at no cost and were awarded funds to buy equipment (a pool table and an air hockey table) for the center. The center will provide recreational and educational alternatives to youth of the community while tackling community issues they feel are relevant to the young people of the Hatch Valley.

The ROC showcased its work at a news conference in June. At the conference, ROC leaders spoke about their work over the last three years and the lessons they have learned through their involvement in building an organization. The young leaders were applauded by the Las Cruces Sun-News and KSNM radio for their determination and success. The young leaders of the Court Youth Center, a Las Cruces based youth center, also showed their support by framing the Sun-News article and presenting it to the ROC leaders.

The ROC is also involved in a partnership that is seeking funding from the Paso Del Norte Youth Initiative. The partnership includes agencies from the Hatch Valley and Las Cruces. Some of the

agencies involved are the Court Youth Center, A Children's Theater, Mariachi Espuelas de Plata, the Boys and Girls Club and the Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces.

The ROC also received funds from Doña Ana County DWI Grants to provide activities that keep youth from and/or inform them about the dangers of drinking and driving. In their proposal, the ROC stated it would have a three-on-three basketball tournament, present a play, paint a mural and have a block party. All activities would be alcohol-free and have an anti-DWI theme. The basketball tournament and the play were completed but the mural and the block party were not. An evaluation is planned to discuss the reasons why two activities were left incomplete and to develop a plan so that all requirements of future grants are met. The ROC plans to apply for the next round of DWI funding to complete the mural and block party projects.

The YOP intensified its work with a youth group in Chamberino. The group is interested in developing its current leadership while recruiting new leaders. The youth organizer provided training to two leaders on power, identifying self-interest and holding one-on-one interviews. The project also expanded its work to Garfield by attending meetings with a group of 14 young people who are currently involved in a summer employ-

ment project and want to continue meeting as a group.

The YOP continued to partner with YouthAction in Albuquerque, New Mexico. YouthAction is a national organization that provides organizing and leadership training as well as networking and exchange opportunities for youth in the Southwest and Southeast. Through YouthAction's Southwest Regional Program, the CDC sent three youth to Brownsville, Texas, for training on Immigration Rights. Future trips include Denver, Colorado and Tucson, Arizona. The CDC will host an event in December 1999.

***Community Economic Development Project:***

The Colonias Development Council redefined its work in community economic development (CED). The project's goal was to assist community members in starting small, cooperative businesses. However, this approach reaches a small portion of the population, while requiring a large amount of resources.

In reassessing its work in CED, the CDC decided to focus on a strategy that would provide colonias residents with access to job training and placement. To begin this approach the CDC chose to assess the experience and skills that exist among colonias residents and at the same time understand the labor needs of

employers. The lack of complete information regarding the needs of employees and employers led the CDC to start a movement toward developing a database that could pull all the data that exist and transform them into information that improves the ability of colonias residents to access job training and placement.

The CDC convened two meetings to discuss the development of such a database and how it would be used by the community. Several agencies interested in economic development were present. They included Community Action Agency, New Mexico Works, Bureau for Business Research and Services, Income Support Division, Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces and Senator Jeff Bingaman's Office. The CDC has agreed to write a concept paper outlining the need for the database, who would use it, where it would be housed and how much it would cost to start and maintain.

With this new change in focus, the CDC has not abandoned the strategy of assisting colonias residents in starting small businesses. Throughout the year, the CDC continued to provide technical assistance and support to *Mujeres en Progreso* (MeP). While the CDC can no longer provide start-up capital and management as it planned, the CDC is committed to assisting the women in writing a business plan for a day care center. The

CDC has helped MeP to clarify its vision for a day care center, develop a market survey instrument, identify a contractor to carry out the survey and analyze the data, identify possible buildings for the center and identify possible funders for its project.

The CDC has worked in collaboration with Jo Ann Weiss and Betty Vega (of the Public Health Department and the New Mexico Community Foundation, respectively) to provide MeP with all the technical assistance necessary for such a venture. Their work has been invaluable to work that has been accomplished by MeP. However, it has been the strength of the MeP members that continues to move the project forward. Their ability to overcome the many obstacles they have encountered, both professional and personal, assures the success of this project.

***Vision:***

The Board of Directors and staff of the Colonias Development Council envision a healthy, hopeful future for the colonias of southern New Mexico. CDC's work leads directly to this vision by strengthening the quality of life in the colonias in three main areas: the colonias residents, the physical environment and the community organizations.

The first area of CDC's vision describes an improved quality of life for colonia residents including integration, education and health. Integration into a larger, mainstream society involves participation in activities and organizations that are not isolated to the colonias communities. In this vision colonia residents participate in regional politics, vote at the municipal, county, state and federal levels, participate in non-colonia activities and mainstream civic organizations, and also hold these civic groups accountable to the colonia community organizations.

Well-educated colonia residents have access to both formal and informal training and education towards self-improvement. CDC envisions an on going creation of learners and teachers who are able to access resources on their own, articulate needs and issues, think strategically, create and utilize choices.

CDC also sees a future with healthy, vibrant colonia communities. The building

blocks of healthy communities are colonia residents that are physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually healthy. Communities are alive with pride, "ganas de vivir" and a desire to be connected. Healthy communities grow internally through conflict resolution, education and intergenerational harmony. Colonia communities also appreciate the importance of a clean environment and adequate infrastructure for the health of all residents.

The second main area of CDC's vision describes an improved physical environment in which all colonia communities have an adequate infrastructure and adequate housing. The criteria for designating communities as colonias are alleviated when the lack of potable water, the lack of a public waste-water system, the lack of paved roads, and the lack of safe, decent and sanitary housing are removed.

The third area of CDC's vision describes the strong, cohesive Council of colonia community organizations that are self-sufficient, united, and able to identify and use their power as a collective. Each community organization is self-sufficient in that they are fiscally autonomous from the Council and are able to seek their own resources. Each organization has a strong local Board of Directors and a pool of actual and possible leaders. Each community organization has the power to make decisions on behalf of their local community,

<p>and the community residents hold the colonia organizations accountable for the decisions that they make.</p> <p>The Council of community organizations is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of a representative from each member community organization. The Council's Board of Directors acts as one united voice through their commitment to reach consensus on every issue and to uphold all decisions that are made. The Council's staff represents the Board of Directors' decisions and the Board respects an implied ongoing consensus in between Board meetings. Member community organizations are autonomous only as it pertains to local issues specific to their community.</p> <p>Colonia residents are able to identify and use their collective power through their local community organizations and the Council. The Council uses its power as a negotiator to represent the collective voice of the colonias through voting blocs and consumer blocs. The Council negotiates with political and economic decision-makers to make available good jobs, decent wages, capital (money, property, equipment) and training.</p> <p>The Colonias Development Council is dedicated to implementing this vision through community organizing around its mission: To improve the quality of life in the colonias of southern New</p>	<p>Mexico. The Board of Directors and staff of CDC believe that the creation of this vision is not only possible, but is a likely and necessary result of CDC's work.</p> <p><b><i>Enviromental &amp; Legal Issues:</i></b></p> <p>CDC is committed to taking a proactive approach in dealing with environmental issues in the colonias. CDC does not condone nor does it encourage anyone to avoid existing regulations. As such, most of CDC staff has been trained to identify potential environmental problems in the communities they work. In particular, we have trained staff that can explain the potential environmental codes violations to the residents. The intent is to give residents the opportunity to correct any potential code violation that may exist. A "walk-through" can be arranged in any community to help CDC identify such potential violations. The organizer for that community can then assist the community as a whole to develop a workplan which will alleviate some of the most pressing problems that may exist.</p>	<p>For some time, the CDC and colonia residents have been concerned with several enforcement sweeps of the colonias to investigate alleged environmental codes violations. Two specific incidents involving code enforcements in the colonias prompted CDC to pursue a lawsuit against the county: The first incident occurred in the Fall of 1997 when U.S. Border Patrol accompanied sheriff's Deputies on a codes sweep. CDC staff and legal counsel, Nancy Simmons, met with then County Sheriff, Jan Carey, to address this issue. While Carey assured CDC that there would be no collusion between Border Patrol raids and environmental codes sweeps, the issue of the pretext and legal authority of the Solid Waste Ordinance surfaced. Sheriff Carey made clear to CDC staff and Ms. Simmons that the interpretation used by the Environmental Crimes Unit (Section 26 of the Solid Waste Ordinance) allowed Officers to enter private property without a warrant and without individualized probable cause for particular property, to inspect for environmental crimes, regardless of whether the property is fenced and regardless of whether the resident was home. CDC rose constitutional objection to Section 26 of the Ordinance, as written and as interpreted by the Sheriff and addressed this</p>
--	---	---

with the County Manager. CDC sent correspondence in November of 1997 to the County Manager to get clarification on the wording of the Ordinance. There was no response from the Manager's office.

The second more recent incident occurred in the fall of 1998, when CDC was on a site visit with a local church group in one of the colonias. While the county contends that this incident was not a codes sweep, the issue of not obtaining permission to inspect property resurfaced. Subsequently, two house guests in a home were detained and deported. CDC and the church group witnessed what appeared to be the use of excessive force by the Deputy Sheriff. In late December of 1998, CDC staff and Nancy Simmons met with interim Sheriff John Robles. Sheriff Robles concurred with the interpretation by Carey given to us a year before. Further, his comment was that given the high rate of human and drug trafficking in the area, it was understandable that the Deputy Sheriff had pulled his gun to demand that the two individuals exit the home.

In January of this year, CDC staff and Ms. Simmons met with the newly elected County Sheriff, Juan Hernández with the intent to clarify the legal authority of the Ordinance. Sheriff Hernández agreed there were changes

needed to be made on the existing Ordinance. He did not commit to agree with either Carey or Robles' interpretation of the Ordinance. However, he suggested that we contact the County's legal department for any further discussion. We did. The County's legal department was remiss in our request to discuss the Ordinance. Thus, CDC felt that in the best interest of colonia residents, and other county residents, the Ordinance mandated a change CDC decided to file suit in Federal Court. This lawsuit was filed in May of 1999.

Specifically, the lawsuit requested a declaratory judgment that the section of the ordinance, Section 26, was in violation of the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. An injunction ordering the County to strike the offending section and that the County provide a plan for training the Sheriff's Department staff in the requirements of Fourth Amendment for entering private property was also included. In addition, all attorney fees were to be paid by the County. While the lawsuit was filed in Federal Court, CDC did not serve the County, as County officials agreed to meet with CDC to discuss the language of Section 26. As per the agreement between CDC and the County Legal Department, the County will review and modify the Solid Waste Ordinance with

the concerns CDC has addressed. The CDC did not agree to withdraw the lawsuit until the ordinance is rewritten to address the issue of Fourth Amendment violation and the Sheriff's Department makes assurances that its staff will be retrained on such rights. CDC awaits the revised version of the Solid Waste Ordinance.

The CDC attempts to work with community residents and public officials to ameliorate unhealthy and unsafe conditions that may exist in the colonias. CDC feels that in the interest of colonia residents in particular, and in the interest of all residents of the county, it is preferable to take a proactive approach to potential problems before they surface. The CDC is committed to work with County officials and staff to address any potentially damaging policies that affect colonia residents.